

A Polit. Pamph. vol 124.

L E T T E R

T O

SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L.D. A.

— *Qui nigrum in candida vertunt.* Juv. Sat. 3.

HERE let those reign, whom PENSIONS can incite
To vote a Patriot black, a courtier white;
Explain their Country's dear-bought Rights away,
And plead for Pirates in the Face of Day;
With slavish Tenets taint our poison'd Youth,
And lend a Lie the Confidence of Truth!

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON's Imitation.

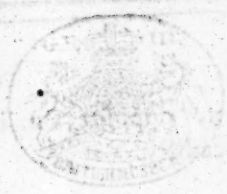
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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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A
H. T. B.
T. O.
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LTD.

— 2 —
The following is a list of the
names of the persons who have
been appointed to the various
positions of the Board of Directors
of the Company, and the names of
the persons who have been appointed
to the various positions of the
Company.



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A

L E T T E R, &c.

S I R,

WITHOUT hesitation or apology, I address myself to you, as the undoubted author of the ministerial rhapsody that has been so industriously circulated under the titled of THE FALSE ALARM. You have ambitiously declared yourself the spitter forth of that effusion of servility and bombast. You *could not* have been concealed.—Whilst the tenets it spreads abroad might have directed us to you, as to a probable source, the strain in which they are delivered marks you decisively.

B

But

But allow me, Sir, to ask you, for what class of readers your reasonings are intended? or, for whose benefit you have *stalked* forth from your Vocabulary, an Orator of Polyfyllables?

Your great friends could not, surely, exact this service from you, for their own sakes. Men who resolve without waiting for conviction, will persist without wishing for a defence. And for the rest of us, *the rabble of England, who might all sink into non-existence without any sensible effect on the state*;* we, doubtless, are either unworthy of your high instruction, or, at least, (permit us to say) not capable of profiting by it.

Believe me, Sir, *the intellectual fight* of ordinary freeholders is liable

* Vide False Alarm, p. 35.

to be *offusqued* by a *superfluous glare* of erudition. The dimension of OUR understanding is not of the proper magnitude to admit of *sesquipedalian documents*. OUR undisciplined taste is apt to be nauseated by the *reduplicated evomition* of unknown idioms. If you would adapt yourself to OUR faculties, you must sink into language of a lower stature than *hendecasyllables*. WE are not skilled to estimate the *weight of terms* *, by their *literal contents*.

I am ready, however, to acknowledge that your book may be well enough calculated for the region, where (as I understand) it has been most greedily devoured. A certain protuberancy of diction may be very edifying to the maids of honour ; and the inflation of your periods cannot fail to find a passage

* Ibid. p. 48.

into that quarter where the ERSE is said to have been *the reigning dialect*.

It shall be my humble, but laborious province, to endeavour to reduce your lofty speculations to the level of vulgar apprehension ; not so much with a view to unwind a thread of refined sophistry, of which indeed you have observed a commendable frugality ; still less to investigate candid argument, of which it is not easy to discover a trace ; but to develope what little meaning you may have wished to impart, by dissipating the *cloud of words* in which it is at present involved, and by exhibiting it in the form in which it must destroy itself, the language of common sense.

Your experience in the construction of pamphlets should preserve you from the absurdity of deviating into ornament, or even of proceeding on your superstructure, till you have scrupulously

lously secured your foundation. You will permit me, therefore, at setting out, to enquire by what train of ideas you have been led *to build the power of the House of Commons on the subversion of the rights of their constituents?* Have you been seduced by theory? or do you tread the surer ground of precedent and fact?

Instead of historical deduction, instead of the evidence of record, the opening of your discourse seems to promise us much philosophical discussion. You lament that the science of government is not better ascertained by a diligent study of the theory of man.* But without any signal display of this science, you drag us through seventeen pages of languid declamation, before you even state the question on which you profess to decide. At length, how-

* Page 4.

ever, we are gratified, at once, with your idea of the point to be contested, with your decision on the subject, and with the principle on which you found your determination, THE GREAT AND PREGNANT PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL NECESSITY.*

And here, Sir, I cannot help repeating a wish that you had either contrived to accommodate your expressions to the common standard, or, at least, in your pursuit of the globose, that you had condescended to manifest some attention to precision.

In what sense is this pregnant term NECESSITY to be taken, and to what is it to be referred ?

If you are maintaining pretensions arising from a *necessity* that supercedes *law* ; a *necessity* of which, the persons

who are to avail themselves of the plea, are to be the sole judges; a necessity that is founded only in the emergencies of a particular crisis, and that implies a momentary annihilation of an established constitution---your principle is indeed *pregnant*---with anarchy or servitude. But if this be the necessity on which you would establish the right of the House of Commons to disqualify by a vote, point out to us the *present* emergence;---shew us that *the state would be overturned* unless the choice of the Freeholders of Middlesex were counteracted. The idea is too gross to be dwelt upon.

Let us proceed in quest of some more promising explication. It is your apparent intention in this passage to reduce your antagonists to the situation of defending an absurdity. You would exhibit them in the inconsistent predicament of acknowledging a *right*, which

which is a relative term, and at the same time disputing the cor-relative obligation.

You would be understood, then, to say, that the *connection* between expulsion and disqualification is founded *on the great and pregnant principle of political necessity*, because the supposition of their being *unconnected* leads to an absurdity.

Now (admitting for a moment the *absurdity*) the *necessity*, in this case, must be *logical*, not *political*. The *reductio ad absurdum* is the same argument always, whether it be applied to political, moral, mathematical, or religious discussions †. This position will
not

† An example may set this matter in a clearer point of view. Let me suppose, for instance, that a right reverend prelate should (as is said to have been

not be contested by any one who has but tasted of science: and I should have thought it trifling to recur to it, if you had not referred us to this *political necessity* for the final decision of the debate, and if the connection of this whole passage in your pamphlet did not seem to require the explication I am exposing.

been threatened) engage in a controversy of so extraordinary a kind, as to maintain that the divine mission of the Founder of the Christian faith is *utterly unconnected* with that of Moses. I will suppose too, that the learned author of the Divine Legation, in his zeal for the Jewish legislator, should take up the contrary side of the question, and in the course of his argument *should reduce his Lordship to an absurdity*. The great polemic would undoubtedly triumph not a little in having demonstrated a NECESSARY connection between the two missions; but I will venture to say, that, in the very phrensy of paradox, he would never pronounce that connection to be founded *on the great and pregnant principle of RELIGIOUS NECESSITY*.

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The words indeed, considered by themselves, and detached from what immediately follows them, may bear a more natural and obvious interpretation: but if the first acceptance I have suggested, carries with it the excess of wickedness, and the second of folly; that which remains behind demands a greater degree of *effrontery* than ought, in reason, to be imputed to any human being.

Do you mean to say, that the power of disqualifying by a vote is founded on the *great and pregnant principle of political necessity, because* such a body as the House of Commons *could not subsist, could not fulfil the end of their institution* without such a power?

Go back then to the first establishment of representation; trace the claims of the representative body thro' the long records of successive parliaments:

ments ; point to the case where this power has been necessary to the existence of the House ; produce a single precedent where it has been exerted, where it has even been pretended to. It has been equally sacred from the heat of virtuous resentments in the best parliaments, from the promptness of venal prostitution in the most abandoned.

The instance in question is the single instance in our annals †. And whether any accession of honour or stability, that may have accrued to the present House of Commons from this measure, can be brought in testimony of *its political necessity*, may safely be left to the determination of the public.

† I am not ignorant that pretended precedents have been cited ; but their insufficiency has been fully demonstrated by the learned author of the *Fair Trial*.

You perceive, Sir, that our dispute might close here. Your principle is apparently wicked, or ridiculous, or in direct contradiction to the experience of ages. But you have bowed the neck to more than Egyptian task-masters : and it may be curious to observe the airy progress of a system that is to be built without foundation or materials.

You rush impetuously into demonstration, and seem impatient to reduce us to an absurdity.

“ To suppose in one the right to command, what another has the right to refuse, is absurd and contradictory †.”

This is readily admitted. If therefore the House of Commons have a right to expel any one of their mem-

† Ibid.

bers, an expelled member is *obliged* to relinquish his seat. He must return afresh into the world; a private man indeed, but with the undiminished rights of a private man:---and ceasing to be a member of their assembly, he has escaped from a jurisdiction, which (upon your own idea) extends not beyond their walls. What now is become of your *absurd and contradictory*?

When you talk of an *absurd right of refusing*, do you refer it to the *constituent body*? If this be what you intend, you have, in the consistency of your logic, changed the terms of your proposition. The constituents have not as yet been introduced into the question. You have not hitherto supposed a right in the House to *command the private Freeholder*, but their own member, who, it is allowed, *must* obey. Upon expulsion he withdraws him-

himself without contest; and the ideal absurdity vanishes.

But you go on as you have begun. You still find it necessary to shift your persons; you substitute the constituents for the member to be expelled: and you begin to discover to us, that this magical fabrick of necessity is in truth supported by the paltry shuffling principle of political legerdemain.

Hence, your *motionless equipoise*, your *equal balance*, your *contrary attractions**. The House command within the sphere of their activity; they command their member, who is bound to obey. A fresh writ is issued, and a NEW MEMBER is returned to Parliament. The same individual, perhaps, as a man;—but I repeat it, a NEW MEMBER.

* Ibid.

We have all the authority, indeed, of your *ipse dixit*, to teach us that this idea is absurd. But what weight soever your dogmas, enforced by *your own* engaging manner, may carry with them in a private circle ; or even in a quarter too sacred for me to violate by inquisitive intrusion ; I may yet be acquitted of presumption, if I venture to allow greater weight to the unanimous consent of the statute law of England, of the law of parliament, of custom, and common sense. Let us bring the opposite authorities together.

You, Sir, lay it down as “ uncontrovertibly certain, that the Commons never intended to leave electors the liberty of returning them an expelled member, *because they always require one to be chosen in the room of him that is expelled ;*” and you, it seems, cannot

cannot see with what propriety a man can be *rechofen in his own room*. *

This, Sir, is your determination in form. Unfortunately for you, the law is not less explicit. There is nothing alleged in your pamphlet that should prevent me from recurring to the strongest possible case†, that of a member *expelled by act of Parliament*, on his acceptance of a place of profit. What ensues? A fresh writ issues; ANOTHER

* Page 24, 25.

† You will observe, Sir, that this case is not cited, at present, on the general question of *disqualification*; but simply to shew, that, in the language of the LAW (which is confessedly the best expositor of itself) the *same* individual may become ANOTHER MEMBER *in his own room*. That this is the sense of the House itself, appears evidently from the *alteration* they thought it necessary to make in the last writ for Middlesex—whether or not that alteration was a formal reversal of the law of the land by a vote of the House, it may not become me to enquire.

MEMBER

MEMBER *is required in the room of him that is expelled* ; the SAME PERSON is almost always returned ; the Commons acknowledge the terms of their requisition to have been complied with ; and the person so returned is constantly admitted as ANOTHER MEMBER, *in his own room.*

The requisition in the writ is not directed to be altered in this case. Yet what says the statute, sufficiently apprised of the full force of that requisition ? “ *such person shall be capable of being again elected.** ”

If the writ, *still unrepealed*, nay, perhaps, *necessarily* existing in the full force of unalterable law, stands in direct opposition to the statute ; the former *insisting* on a different person from him who is permitted by the latter ; we are

* 4th and 5th of Anne.

seriously reduced to a state of *motionless equipoise*, and the law in this case becomes *felo de se*. But the laws of England never appear absurd, unless in the expositions of a commentator of slavish principles.

The immediate effect of the expulsion is a political *annihilation*. A subsequent return is *not* of the nature of a political resurrection. It has no reference to a former delegation ; it sends the member, as a new existence, unconscious, unaccountable for former parliamentary delinquencies ; his political identity is destroyed ; he is become, in the eye of common sense, in the established idea of Parliament, in the express language of the law, to all intents and purposes, ANOTHER MEMBER.

“ But, it seems, the Commons *never*
 “ *intended to leave electors the liberty*
 “ of

“ of returning them an expelled member.”*

In the free ages of Greece or Rome, the wretch who should have uttered such a treason against the supremacy of the people would instantly have been overwhelmed with stones, or hurried to the precipice.

Do you conceive the full force of the word CONSTITUENT ? It has the same relation to the House of Commons as Creator to creature.

THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE are not what the Commons have ceded to them, but what they have reserved to themselves ; *the privileges of the Commons* are not what they have an indefeasible pretension or by arbitrary and discretionary claim, but what THE PEOPLE,

* Page 24.

for their own benefit, have allowed them.

Do you apprehend that the lesser barons, when, for their own convenience, they gave up their *natural* and *positive* right to a *personal* vote in the great council of the nation, intended to submit themselves to the condition of vassalage? that they meant to hold their franchises at the discretion of beings of their own formation?

“ But, still; if the House cannot
“ punish their member, he may attack
“ with impunity the rights of the people and the title of the king.”*

The absolute power of the House over their members, is, for the present, admitted. But a member of parliament is a political being; the punish-

ment, therefore, of his political delinquencies, inflicted by the political body to which he belongs, cannot extend beyond his political existence.

To estimate the merits of the members of the community at large, for the purpose of deciding upon the pretensions of *candidates*, is too momentous a concern to be confided to any body of *delegates* whatsoever. The cognisance of such matters must come before the higher tribunal of the collective body; an assembly, whose *free choice* enters essentially, and by a real political necessity, into the idea of a legal parliament.

“ But if the doctrine of re-election
 “ were received, there would be *no punishment in expulsion*; for no representative can dread a dismissal to his
 “ constituents.”*

No more ought any sincere and pious christian to dread the day of judgment. But if there be indeed nothing terrible in such a dismissal, why do your employers shrink back at the idea of a *dissolution*? *Their fears* give the flat contradiction to your argument, and the very design of your book is a full refutation of the doctrine you are inculcating.

It were endless to pursue you thro' all the doublings and mazes of prevarication. Your next attempt is to demonstrate (in *your* manner) that the case of a re-elected placeman makes directly against the general right of re-election. And in proof of this position, you refer us (as usual) to the very authority that must confound you.*

* Page 26, 27.

The statute of 30 Ch. II. had enacted that a member refusing to take the oaths, and subscribe the test, should ---What? not merely be expelled, but *disabled to sit in the House during that Parliament.*

Here then, the *general* right of being chosen again to a seat vacated is clearly ascertained. It required a *special clause and solicitous provision* * to superinduce incapacity on expulsion.

If, as you contend, it had been the the known and indubitable law of parliament, that expulsion created incapacity, the scrupulous particularity of a *disabling clause* would, in that case, have been superfluous and impertinent ; it would have been sufficient to have enacted *that a writ should issue for the election of a new member.*

* Page 28.

Nay, the very existence of the statute is instead of a thousand arguments. Had the country party, who at that time predominated in the House, been conscious of such potency in their *vote*, they would not, in the heat of conflict, have waited for the prolix formality of a statute; they would not have begged the concurrence of the other House to a point, into which that House cannot, it seems, at this day, even enquire, without breach of the privileges of the Commons; they would not, lastly, have left the great business of disabling the Papists to the uncertainty of the King's assent, which nothing but the last necessity could have extorted. *

But,

* You instruct, indeed, *us* *puny controvertists*, a little farther in p. 30. that the Commons proceeded in this case by bill, on account of the *permanency of law*, in which circumstance alone, you tell us, it differs in these matters from a *vote*; and

But, if you are susceptible of conviction from demonstration, the concluding words of the disabling clause must silence you for ever upon this head. The disabled member is there represented under the similitude of a person NATURALLY DEAD. It is not the genius of an act of parliament, Sir, to sport in metaphor, or wanton in description. The similitude before us is pregnant with LAW : and it is not in the power of words to proclaim more distinctly the doctrine I am maintain-

and that they *could* have determined *for themselves* to *disable* all who should not take the test. As well may they *enact* tomorrow, by their *sole* authority, "that no member shall be permitted to sit in that House, who does not subscribe his assent to the thirty-nine articles of the church of England." As well may they multiply disqualifications without end, and suspend or dispense with law; but they must first get rid of that fundamental law, which says, that no man shall be disseised of his franchise *nisi per legem terræ et judicium parium*.

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ing, unless it had been engrossed in CAPITALS, that ONLY DEATH, OR THE LAW CAN INCAPACITATE.

Having thus explored the original, I come next (in reverse of the order you have observed) to consider the copy. The act of Anne, which prescribes the expulsion of a member on his acceptance of a place of profit, has adopted the strong expressions of that of Charles, to shew in what light the dependants on the crown in parliament are viewed by the constitution :---but it annexed the *saving clause*, to shew with what religious reverence the great popular right of election is approached even by the legislature, and with what reserve, though in the fullness of their power, they incur the appearance of intrenching upon it. But this clause would not have been inserted had *expulsion* simply been enacted. The statute has gone farther ; and, in its zeal
against

against placemen, has declared that they ought to be considered as *naturally dead*; that is, in a situation where a re-election would be *an impossibility in nature*. By *necessary construction of a statute* therefore (a thing very different from *a vote of the House of Commons*) the act must (without this clause) have been understood to *disable*.

It has already been observed, that it was the intention of this statute to express a distrust, and even abhorrence of retainers to the crown in parliament. But you, Sir, who seem determined to be uniformly at variance with the spirit of the law and the constitution, assert boldly *that a place contaminates no character**; that it is a badge of merit, and a just ground of confidence; that this is the idea of the

* Page 28, 29.

Commons themselves: and, in short, that an act of parliament is expressly passed to expel a member from his seat, *because* he is become more honourable, and marked as more worthy of it!

This, Sir, is beyond the reach of criticism, and applies directly to our contempt. But what are we to think of your total defection *from yourself*? of such a shameful revolt from principles long and strenuously, and even honourably maintained? Your friends *may pity*; the public abominates.

Your original sentiments concerning placemen and pensioners are as notorious to the world as your inveteracy against *the Scotch*. You have at length, it seems, discovered *worth* and *dignity* in the former; and are so perfectly reconciled to the latter, as to have deviated (in despite of nature) into an *attempt at humour* in their defence,
hold-

holding out to public ridicule the unwieldy exhibition of the gambols of a colossus!---But the merits of Lord Bute are superabundant; and, let me add, his discernment is not of the meanest; by a well-placed *pension of three hundred pounds a year* he has expiated his own sins and those of his country.

Yet, surely, if it be upon such terms that you are become a PENSIONER, it were far better to return back to that poor but honest state, when you and the miserable *Savage* *, on default of the pittance that should have secured your quarters at the club, were contented---*in the open air*---to growl at the *moon*, and Whigs, and Walpole, and the house of Brunswick.

* The unfortunate Mr. Richard Savage.

But,

But, if the wages of prostitution, once tasted, are too delicious to be relinquished, you must, at least, be sensible, that they are not to be enjoyed but by the loss of all respect and consideration with the public. A reflection, one would think, that might have secured you from the indiscretion of attempting to impose unwelcome falsehoods on the ignorant or superficial, by the mere weight of your authority. The gross and virulent insults you have affectedly thrown out against Mr. WILKES, (who is confessedly the favourite of the public; whose private friendships are extensive and sincere; yet of whom you chuse to assert, that he is spoken well of by no man*) are not more scandalous than they are injudicious.

The greater part of the world do not appear to acquiesce in the criminality of the charges that have been alleged

* Page 6.

against that gentleman; *although* he has been singled out for the RE-PUBLICATION * of a paper that had been re-published before in almost all the journals in the kingdom, and *although* his servant was bribed to rob him of a poem which he had scrupulously shut up from the general eye. The poem, indeed, by the common accounts of it, is not much more defensible than the shocking vices of your employers: but the disgust naturally excited in liberal minds by indecency, is, in this instance, lost in the abhorrence of the means by which evidence was obtained against its PUBLISHER.†

But

* It is remarkable, that the *original* ground of Mr. Wilkes's expulsion (as set forth in the votes) was his being the *author* of Number 45, of the North Briton; an allegation that never was revoked. And yet he has at no time been even accused, judicially, of the fact.

† In the next edition of your Dictionary, you will hardly fail to insert the following new acceptance
of

But it is not enough to load Mr. Wilkes with crimes. You charge the Freeholders of the first county in England with re-electing him upon the recommendation of those crimes*. I must ask you plainly, Sir, is it your intention, in this passage, *to lend a lie the confidence of truth?* or do you seriously believe, that even the most insignificant borough that your masters command, would adopt the interest of any person whatsoever, merely on the merit of sedition and obscenity?---I give you the alternative of being infamous or contemptible.

The freeholders of Middlesex (men of plain sense, and of an honesty that

of a verb. "To PUBLISH (from the Latin *publicare*) to suppress; to keep private; to *lock up* in a scrutore."—You know whither to go for your authority.

* Page 25.

has

has stood unshaken against all the assaults of corruption, and all the intimidations of power) did not select Mr. WILKES for their representative, in so distinguished a manner, in reward of the crimes imputed to him---an insinuation that must rouse the indignation of every man of honour in the kingdom---but in acknowledgment of substantial benefits obtained by that gentleman to the constitution of this country ; in detestation of the unjust, illegal, oppressive, and ungentlemanly means put in practice to convict him ; and in order to mark to the present age and to latest posterity, that the man who encounters the attacks of despotism with fortitude and perseverance, shall never want the avowed protection, and generous support of the great body of the people of England.

But, at every step, you advance in
brutal insolence. These noble spirits
F might,

might, in your judgment it seems,
 “ all sink into non-existence, without
 “ any other effect, than that there
 “ would be room made for a NEW
 “ RABBLE,”* who, by parity of absurdity, might perish in their turn, with as little detriment to the state.

We are not at a loss to discover, to what quarter you are indebted for a mode of thinking and of speaking that has never before been endured in any country pretending to freedom.

It is no secret to the public, Sir, in *what cabinet* the expedient of a second candidate took its rise ; or by what abject humiliations the detested *suggestor* of it made his peace, and obtained re-admission there ; or by *whose son*, the first glorious opposers of this invasion of our rights have been vilified in lan-

guage too insolent to go unpunished, too ungentlemanly to be repeated; or by *whose brother*, the chartered freemen of England, whose rights have been confirmed to them by thirty-nine successive ratifications of the great national compact, have been authoritatively, and as it were *ex officio*, pronounced to be BASE-BORN.

The public fees, Sir, that such ideas and such measures have flowed from the same spring. But the thing is not altogether without example. A PRINCELY DAME in Rome had *her* objections to the *rabble*; and chose to signify them in terms exactly similar to those which you adopted. The event was different. But in Rome there was virtue. She suffered as a TRAITRESS †.

But

† CLAUDIA, novo more, judicium majestatis apud populum *mulier* subiit, quod in confertâ
F 2 multi-

But I return : “ *The House of Commons* (you tell us) *decides disputes arising from elections.*” *

Admitted. If therefore the question had arisen, whether Mr. Wilkes’s majority were composed of men legally possessed of freeholds of the clear annual value of forty shillings, the House would have been competent judges in the case.

“ *But a partial, or even tyrannical decision of the House has, in no other instance, excited such a general alarm.*” †

A partial or unjust determination of an election, however odious, is but a confined injury, limited to the parties

multitudine ægrè procedente carpento, palam optaverit, ut frater suus PULCHER revivisceret, atque iterum classem amitteret, QUO MINOR TURBA ROMÆ FORET. Sueton.

* Page 35.

† Page 35, 36.

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immediately affected: but a power of creating disabilities, erected into a principle on the ground of expediency; rooted in a pretended political necessity, and † *branching out* into *occasional* incapacitations; such a power extends to, and concludes every elector in the kingdom, and enables a wicked minister to defeat the whole constitutional establishment of representation. The distant counties ‡, therefore, have wisely caught the alarm; sensible that they may soon feel the oppression in their own persons, if they silently submit to a decision destructive of the rights of the freeholders of Middlesex.

“ But in spite of the discontents
 “ that have so long prevailed, *the state*
 “ *of the nation has continued the same;*
 “ *the sun has risen, and the corn grown;*
 “ *and whatever talk has been of the dan-*

† Page 12.

‡ Page 44.

“ *ger*

*“ger of property, yet he that ploughed
 “the field commonly reaped it, and he
 “that built the house was master of the
 “door.”*

What then ! were the fruits of their honest industry enjoyed by those unhappy victims who were butchered by the guards ? or who perished by the hired and the pardoned ruffian ? Was *that door* in the power of its owner, which was daringly forced open by the slaves of power, for the purpose of throwing Mr. WILKES into the situation from which you reproach the freeholders of Middlesex for wishing to take their representative ?—You are somewhat out of luck, Sir, in your exemplifications.

Men may, and do, live in tolerable comfort in arbitrary countries. But it is the birth-right of an Englishman to be conscious that he is answerable to the laws

laws alone for his conduct. It is finely observed by Lord Bolingbroke, " That
 " slavery does not consist so much in
 " the number of stripes one receives,
 " as in the power of a master to inflict
 " them when he pleases." And he
 warns us " that we should always
 " take the alarm when the breach is
 " made, and not wait for the as-
 " fault."

It is an observation of the same writer, " That the political eye is the
 " exact reverse of the natural. Ob-
 " jects at a distance appear to the first
 " enormous, and, as they approach,
 " contract to their natural dimensions.
 " He conceives, that if, in the time of
 " *Augustus*, any man could have fore-
 " told, that in a small number of
 " years, a horse would be made a con-
 " sul, all Rome would have treated
 " him as a madman; yet it appears,
 " that

“ that when it did happen, the people
 “ were not much surpris’d.”

From the present temper of THE PEOPLE of this country, I am willing to draw an omen of the immortality of the liberties of England. But a time may come, when a House of Commons may wish to arrogate to themselves, *in every instance*, the incommunicable right of election, and to supply the vacancies in their body (when they may chuse to fill them up) by *co-optation*. You, Sir, at least, are determin’d to contribute your endeavours to hasten such an event, by attempting to ridicule the apprehensions of the people, arising from experienced invasions of their rights, and by treating the *yeomanry* as unable to investigate this very intricate question, “ *Whether* the franchise
 “ arising from their freehold is worth
 “ having, if they are not permitted
 “ to

“ to chuse their own representa-
“ tives?”

But it may be matter of some curiosity to allow your system its full extent, and to examine whether your arguments have not a tendency to *annihilate* THE HOUSE OF LORDS, as well as to enslave the people: two events, indeed, which, if we may judge from some late spirited proceedings in that House, cannot be easily separated.

In establishing the power of the House of Commons over their members, you consider them as an independent, unresponsible, uncontrollable assembly: dissoluble, indeed; but, whilst they subsist, CO-ORDINATE with the Lords.

What should hinder, then, but that your political necessity should apply
G . with

with equal force to either assembly?

“ For a member of *the House of Lords*
 “ cannot be cited for his conduct in
 “ parliament, before any other court ;
 “ and therefore, if the House cannot
 “ punish him, he may attack with im-
 “ punity, the rights of the people, and
 “ the title of the King. The whole
 “ must have power over individuals ;
 “ and, in fact, this power has been
 “ exercised by the *House of Lords*, often
 “ in imprisonment, sometimes in ex-
 “ pulsion. It is a power rooted in
 “ the principles of government, and
 “ branched out by occasional practice.

“ Expulsion includes disability ; and
 “ a disability, thus produced, must con-
 “ tinue (as in the other House) as long
 “ as the House itself subsists. But the
 “ House of Lords are a permanent
 “ body ; the parliamentary rights,
 “ therefore, of an expelled peer are sus-
 “ pended

“ pended during life : but they are an
“ hereditary body ; the peerage there-
“ fore is exterminated, and the for-
“ feiture extends to posterity.

“ All political positions are liable
“ to objections. It is obvious that au-
“ thority, thus extensive and uncon-
“ trollable, may be injuriously exerted ;
“ but the possibility of abuse is no ar-
“ gument against authority.

“ A puny controvertist may suspect
“ an illegality in the subversion of in-
“ heritances ; but that political neces-
“ sity which has been able to over-
“ throw the franchises of electors, esta-
“ blished by the great charter, and con-
“ firmed by the bill of rights, will here
“ too have its course.

“ The principle being thus esta-
“ blished, it is easy to pursue it into
“ action.

“ Every body knows the barbarity
“ with which Coionel Luttrell has been
“ persecuted by the rabble, and the
“ predilection with which he has been
“ adopted by the House of Commons.
“ I will suppose that respectable gen-
“ tleman to have traced some of those
“ numerous and inflammatory libels,
“ by which he has been so injuriously
“ stigmatized, as far as LORD TEMPLE.
“ His complaints are laid before the
“ House of Commons, who can refuse
“ nothing to a person for whom they
“ have done *so much*. A conference is
“ desired with the other House, and the
“ charge is preferred in form. The
“ penalty of a *false, scandalous, and se-*
“ *ditionous libel* is ascertained by recent
“ precedent. The noble Lord, and his
“ illustrious

“ illustrious family, are divested for
“ ever of their hereditary pretensions ;
“ the opposition is deprived of the sup-
“ port of the most distinguished noble-
“ man of the age ; a door is opened
“ between the two houses for mutual
“ compliances of this kind, and reci-
“ procal incapacitations ; till at length,
“ the case, *so humourously* supposed to
“ exist in one House, may take place
“ in both, and there shall not remain
“ an ENGLISHMAN in either assembly
“ of the legislature.”

The public perceive, Sir, with what kind provision the poison and the antidote are joined together in nature, and how completely, in the present instance, the effect of the worst intentions is counteracted by ignorance and absurdity.

Your

Your book supplies all the materials of an answer to itself. In one place, * you suppose expulsions to be very rare : in another † your argument turns upon the idea of their frequency.

You tell us, at setting out, that the House cannot subsist without the power of incapacitation : In another ‡ passage, you are at much pains to prove that this power is *ineffectual* to any essential purposes of the constitution, which can only be secured by the permanency of a statute.

It is your established principle, that the House have an absolute, uncontrollable power of *expelling any one of their members* : yet, when it suits your occasions, § you maintain expressly “ *that*

* Page 40.

† Page 30.

‡ Page 25.

§ Page 31.

“ *there*

“ *there cannot exist, with respect to*
 “ *the same subject, at the same time,*
 “ *an absolute power to chuse, and an ab-*
 “ *solute power to reject.*” This indeed,
 is to do business effectually : it is to *inter-*
dict every candidate, and make the
 vote of every elector *useless* and *dead*.

In the midst of these contradictions,
 there is one point in which you are
 consistent. You discover in every line
 a rooted attachment to “ *the unhappy*
 “ *family*” whom “ *the gloomy, sullen*
 “ *William*” drove out :---and, in the
 blindness of your zeal, or in the candor
 of Jacobitism, when you even mean to
 pay a compliment to the best of princes,
 you are betrayed into the detestable
 and traiterous insinuation, that he is
 the only king since the Revolution,
 whose character, or whose measures,
 have borne any resemblance to those of
 the abdicated line.

“ You

You expressly accuse the party whose cause I am maintaining,† “ of having
 “ endeavoured to alienate the affections
 “ of the people from *the only* king,
 “ who, *for almost a century*, has much
 “ appeared to desire, or much endeavoured to deserve them.

It is impossible to misunderstand you. A *complete* century would have left us amidst the infamies of the Second *Charles* ; but you are habituated to the name of *James*, and are determined to bring us down to the æra of your abomination, the glorious Revolution.----Yet, surely, the *good Anne* might have been excepted, for the merit of the pious purposes of her last four years.----But I repress myself.---It is but too notorious, that you are

† Page 50.

not the only person who has been suffered to approach St. James's, with all the principles and prejudices of *St. Germain's*.* What better, then, was to be expected, than unheard-of exertions

* It was a happy elucidation of the opinions of some of these adventitious retainers to the new court, when an honourable person (since become a peer) who acted as premier to the favourite a few years ago, caused THE HEAD to be removed from a statue of the late king, to make room for *that* of his present majesty. This noble Lord is a great copyist. The blasphemous and obscene inscriptions that decorate his villa at W——, are parodied (by the most horrid profanation) from the sacred writings. This elucidation of his politics is taken, with somewhat less inconsistency, from the Annals of *Tiberius*. The story is in *Tacitus*, who, enumerating the charges brought against *Marcellus*, records the following; *In statuâ, amputato capite Augusti, effigiem Tiberii inditam*. It is worth remarking in what manner the emperor received the information. *Exarsit adeò*, says the annalist, *ut ruptâ taciturnitate proclamaret, se quoque in eâ causâ laturum sententiam, palam et juratum*.

H

of

of unconstitutional powers, on the part of administration ; and the prostitution of some HIRELING PEN, in the cause of passive obedience and non-resistance, but thinly veiled in their new-fangled disguise of A GREAT AND PREGNANT PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL NECESSITY ?

I am, &c. &c.

THE AUTHOR.



